PROVISIONAL
For participants only

NPT/CONF.IV/SR.9
10 December 1990

[redacted] PT.

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

FOURTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 27 August 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. de RIVERO (Peru)

later: Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco)

CONTENTS

Election of Vice-Presidents (continued)

General debate (continued)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

GE.90-66051/5074a

[redacted]

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENTS (agenda item 6) (continued)

The PRESIDENT recalled that in compliance with rule 5 of the rules of procedure, the Conference had already elected 21 of the statutory 26 Vice-Presidents. Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, the Republic of Korea and Yemen had presented candidates for the five remaining posts. In the absence of objection, he would take it that the Conference endorsed those candidatures.

It was so decided.

GENERAL DEBATE (agenda item 12) (continued)

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) said that the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons assumed particular significance against the background of the rapid and very important changes that were taking place. Current events should provide the impetus necessary to ensure that the Treaty was both applied and observed. The NPT, whose provisions would, if they were genuinely respected, permit the international community to achieve total disarmament, constituted a most important instrument for the maintenance of peace and security throughout the world; and that was why the Conference should carefully monitor its application, particularly in countries situated in regions where there was conflict. The Egyptian Government again appealed to South Africa and Israel to adhere to the Treaty as rapidly as possible. It welcomed the decision by China and France to attend the Conference as observers: that constituted a further step towards extension of the Treaty. Egypt unreservedly endorsed the objectives of the Treaty and hoped that the Conference would take place in an atmosphere of dialogue rather than confrontation.

East-West rapprochement gave cause for optimism concerning the future of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. On the other hand, events in the Persian Gulf clearly demonstrated that regional disarmament and the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones were very important measures for the strengthening of peace and security. In the 1964 Cairo Declaration, the Egyptian Government had committed itself to the promotion of a nuclear-weapon-free Africa. Furthermore, Egypt had begun negotiations with Iran on the subject of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. That initiative had been endorsed by the General Assembly at its session in 1974 and, every year since 1980, a consensus resolution had been adopted on the subject. In 1988 the Secretary-General of the United Nations had convened a group of experts to study the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and Egypt

looked forward to the group's findings. The Government hoped that non-nuclear-weapon States would abstain from helping others in the same situation to acquire such weapons and was most grateful to IAEA for its study on ways and means of implementing the provisions of the Treaty in the region. It would continue to assist the Director-General of the Agency in seeking to ensure that all the countries of the region placed their nuclear installations under IAEA safeguards. On 8 April 1990 President Mubarak had taken the initiative of calling for a nuclear-weapon-free zone as a matter of the greatest urgency, and seeking a total ban on chemical, biological and nuclear weapons in the Middle East and a commitment on the part of all the countries of the region to respect such a ban. The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would complement the international efforts undertaken within the framework of the NPT and the Geneva Conference on Disarmament to secure a treaty banning chemical weapons.

A new era had begun in 1945: the nuclear era, which had also ushered in an age of insecurity. States without nuclear weapons feared that States with such weapons might use them; that was why the Egyptian Government wished to see an article in the Treaty guaranteeing non-nuclear-weapon States protection from that threat. In that connection, Security Council resolution 255 of 1968 was unlikely to be effective. Moreover, although the five nuclear-weapon States had individually declared that they would not use them against States which did not possess such weapons, it was difficult to interpret those commitments, except that of China, as unconditional.

The Egyptian Government consequently hoped that the Security Council would adopt a new resolution to remedy those shortcomings.

The Egyptian Government invited all nuclear-weapon States to take advantage of prevailing circumstances to step up their negotiations with a view to total disarmament.

Recalling that article IV of the 1967 Treaty provided that States should undertake not to deploy nuclear weapons in outer space, the Egyptian Government called on the two super-Powers to intensify their negotiations in order to bring the arms race in that domain as rapidly as possible to an end.

A comprehensive test-ban treaty would constitute an important milestone on the road towards both horizontal and vertical non-proliferation. The Egyptian Government therefore supported General Assembly resolution 44/106 on the banning of nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and

under water. It welcomed the progress made by the Conference on Disarmament and the creation of a Committee on the banning of nuclear tests and hoped that negotiations would lead to a comprehensive test ban.

Implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty would help to resolve economic crises by freeing resources for the campaign against drought, desertification and pollution. In that connection, the States Parties should have access to the information necessary for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Non-nuclear-weapon States had clearly committed themselves to respect the provisions of the Treaty. It was time for the nuclear-weapon States to do the same. They could make a start in that direction by reinforcing the security of States which had pledged themselves not to acquire such weapons.

Mr. ROZENTAL (Mexico) recalled that Mexico had been the first of the Latin American and Caribbean countries to ratify the 1963 Moscow Treaty, the 1967 Tlatelolco Treaty and the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty. It was on those three pillars, together with the Treaty of Rarotonga, that the present international régime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was built - a régime which was not yet universal, and which had not achieved its principal objective: a world completely free of nuclear weapons. Mexico's adherence to those multilateral agreements demonstrated a consistent policy based on the conviction that nuclear arms must be done away with. The Treaty of Tlatelolco was the corner-stone of the régime of total absence of nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Mexican Government once again urged France to ratify additional Protocol I of the Treaty; it also called on all those Latin American and Caribbean countries which had not yet done so to accede to the Treaty.

Unlike the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the NPT sought merely to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Although for some the Treaty was a brake to horizontal non-proliferation, it should not be forgotten that article VI and the preambular paragraphs referred to nuclear disarmament and the banning of all nuclear weapon tests. For the vast majority of non-nuclear-weapon States, however, the Treaty also constituted a brake to vertical proliferation. That position was reflected in resolution 2028 (XX) adopted by the General Assembly on 19 November 1965 which, in turn, was based on the memorandum submitted by the delegations of the so-called Group of Eight of the then Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, according to which a treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was not an end in itself but only a means to the achievement

of general and complete disarmament and, more particularly, nuclear disarmament, and that measures to prohibit the spread of nuclear weapons should, therefore, be coupled with or followed by tangible steps to halt the nuclear arms race and to limit, reduce and eliminate the stocks of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery.

The NPT was also designed to promote international co-operation in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In that regard, the Mexican Government had continued to support the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Welcoming the fact that more than 140 States were currently Parties to the Treaty, Mexico regretted that not all States had acceded to it. The absence of certain States was particularly significant; and the time had come for an open and constructive dialogue with them in order to identify the controversial elements of the present non-proliferation régime and find solutions acceptable to all. The Mexican Government welcomed the presence as observers of many non-party States.

The Fourth Review Conference was more important than its predecessors, since it was the last one to be held before 1995, when the Parties would have to come to a decision with regard to the extension of the Treaty. Thus, the present Conference would have to examine those nuclear disarmament measures which must be adopted before 1995, so as to lay the groundwork for the longest possible extension of the Treaty. The three Depositary States, which possessed nuclear weapons, had not met their obligations under the eighth to twelfth preambular paragraphs and article VI of the Treaty, and that was why the Mexican delegation attached great importance to the draft resolution reproduced in document NPT/CONF.IV/L.1, in which the Group of Non-Aligned and other States had set before the Conference a proposal designed to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty and ensure its extension beyond 1995.

He subscribed fully to the statement by the representative of the Non-Aligned Group and expressed the hope that the Fourth Review Conference would make headway in the direction of a genuine régime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Encouraging initiatives had taken place in the field of disarmament since 1985; various measures had been adopted since 1987 to prevent the risks of nuclear war and increase confidence, especially in Europe; important agreements had also been, or were in the process of being reached.

Nevertheless, the absence of political will to conclude a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty continued to be an obstacle to nuclear disarmament. The United States, the United Kingdom and their NATO allies insisted on the need to continue nuclear testing in order to maintain the credibility of their nuclear arsenals and justify their doctrine of deterrence. In the middle of 1990, it might well be asked who was to be deterred. Europe was in the throes of profound transformations. The matter was no longer one of adapting the military doctrines of the past to new realities, since those doctrines themselves had expired. The thinking of the Cold War years had to be unlearned, because nuclear weapons had lost their raison d'être.

He welcomed the reduction of 20 to 30 per cent in the strategic arsenals, but noted with anxiety that the weapons themselves were not disappearing, but were being redeployed outside Europe, to other regions. Thus, the nuclear threat had dwindled in Europe, but it had not disappeared. Nuclear disarmament would not be achieved as long as nuclear weapon testing and the production of fissionable material for military purposes continued. The necessary steps must therefore be taken to "suffocate" the nuclear arms race.

Mexico attached great importance to the international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy provided for in article IV and in the sixth and seventh preambular paragraphs of the NPT, and emphasized the need to expand that co-operation and strengthen the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Nuclear energy was an essential component in the energy programmes of 27 countries in which a total of 434 nuclear power plants were located; and nuclear energy already account for 17 per cent of the world's electricity.

Several warnings, some of them tragic as in the case of Chernobyl, had highlighted the risks inherent in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Meetings had been devoted to the study of those risks. Interest in nuclear energy had declined in recent years, essentially for reasons of safety and of cost. That was a no doubt temporary state of affairs, and renewed efforts must be made to meet increased demands for nuclear know-how and equipment for peaceful purposes. The development of nuclear energy for civilian uses could give rise to suspicions regarding certain military intentions and article III of the NPT and the IAEA safeguards system were thus very important in that context. He noted, nevertheless, that some countries continued to lay disproportionate emphasis on that aspect, to the detriment of the Agency's co-operation programme.

Mexico remained ready to play an active role, but considered that the international community's tolerence was not inexhaustible and that it was impossible to continue to sustain a system in which certain countries enjoyed all the advantages and others had reached the limits of their patience. The situation was clear: the principles of the NPT must lead to a real and valid commitment. Otherwise, the future of humanity and of the Treaty itself were uncertain. Mexico urged all delegations to strive to achieve results in accordance with the wishes of the great majority of the countries of the world. Any element of preconception which jeopardized dialogue and risked frustrating the legitimate hopes which nations had placed in the Conference must be firmly set aside.

Mr. Benhima (Morocco) took the Chair.

Mr. LUONG (Viet Nam) said that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remained the corner-stone of the non-proliferation régime, despite all the problems linked with its implementation. He was pleased to note that since the Third Review Conference there had been new accessions to the Treaty. The large number of participants in the Conference, and the participation of non-party States, especially of two nuclear-weapon States, encouraged hopes that the objective of universality of the Treaty would be attained.

Since the Third Review Conference, international relations had undergone profound modifications. The world had moved out of the cold war period into one of dialogue and co-operation. There were now real possibilities of preserving international peace and security and finding equitable solutions to regional conflicts. In that context, the process of both general and nuclear disarmament had made great progress. With the entry into force of the INF Agreement in 1988, genuine nuclear disarmament measures had been taken for the first time in history. Also to be welcomed was the signature of the verification protocols to the "threshold" treaties of 1974 and 1976, as well as the progress being made towards conclusion of the START treaty, which provided for important reductions in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the Soviet Union and the United States. There was reason to be satisfied, but not excessively so, since even if the START treaty were well implemented, thousands of nuclear warheads would remain, enough to cause a nuclear holocaust whose consequences would bring about the total destruction of civilization.

The Vietnamese delegation hoped that the nuclear disarmament process would continue, and that non-nuclear-weapon States which had renounced the nuclear option would succeed in their demand that the nuclear-weapon States fulfil their obligations under article VI of the NPT.

He was convinced that the most decisive step to end the nuclear arms race was a total ban on nuclear weapon tests. He noted with satisfaction the recent revival, within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, of the Ad Hoc Committee on a nuclear test ban, and hoped that it would meet in the very near future. He found it unacceptable that some nuclear-weapon States relied on nuclear deterrence as their official security doctrine and persisted in believing that nuclear weapon testing was essential to ensure the safety and reliability of their nuclear weapons. Equally unacceptable was the view held by certain States that the prohibition of all nuclear weapon tests could only be a long-term objective. That position was at variance with the basic principles of the NPT.

The Vietnamese delegation considered that the time was ripe for an immediate moratorium on all nuclear explosions, pending the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. In that connection, it endorsed the appeal by the group of non-aligned countries Parties to the NPT and also welcomed the readiness of the Soviet Union to adopt such a moratorium on the basis of reciprocity with the United States.

The non-nuclear-weapon States had the right to demand that all the nuclear-weapon States renounce the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them. Unfortunately, there had been no progress in negotiations on that question. So far, only one nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty had guaranteed not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. In that regard, he supported the initiative by Nigeria on the strengthening of negative security assurances, and hoped that the changes taking place in international relations and in the concepts of security would make it possible to solve that question in the near future.

Concerning the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in accordance with article VII of the NPT, he welcomed the conclusion of the Treaty of Rarotonga in 1986, and expressed the hope that many South Pacific and other countries would ratify all the protocols to that Treaty.

Viet Nam had on more than one occasion supported the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the South East Asia region, and it endorsed the ASEAN countries' initiative in that regard. His country also supported the efforts being made to create nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world.

Viet Nam fully supported the IAEA safeguards system which, in accordance with article III of the NPT, was designed to prevent the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons; it had, moreover, signed a full-scope safeguards agreement for its own nuclear reactor.

Concerning article IV of the NPT, Viet Nam paid tribute to the efforts of IAEA to enable all States Parties, and particularly the developing countries, to have access to the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Like the non-aligned countries, Viet Nam considered that there should be a better balance between IAEA's expenditure on assistance and on its safeguard functions.

The future of the NPT would depend on events up to the extension conference in 1995. For the present it was important for the Fourth Review Conference to work out measures that would ensure the global application of the Treaty.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.